



Finding Common Ground Through Dialogue

A Brief Overview of Public Deliberation

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About Me

- PhD. Candidate in Public Affairs
- Research Interests: Public Deliberation & Social Capital
- Born and Raised in Haiti
- 2010 Earthquake
- BA in Political Science and Master of Public Administration (UGA)
- 2014 Roosevelt Scholar
- 2022 Award Winner: Taylor L. Willingham Legacy (National Issues Forums)
- Economic Development Director, City of Stockbridge (GA)



**Why did you
choose this
workshop
today?**

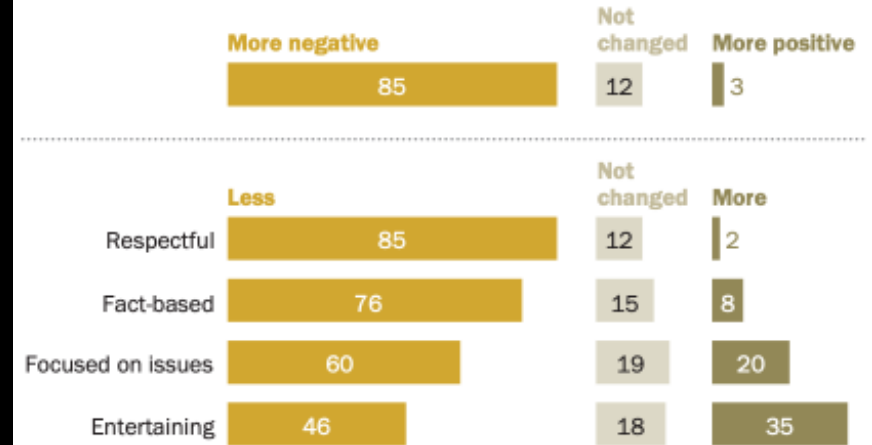


The Bad News

- The United States is polarizing faster than other democracies
- Many Americans believe that political debate in the country has become less respectful, fact-based, and substantive
- Our primary institutions are not well-equipped to address the tough issues that we face

Most Americans say political debate in the U.S. has become less respectful, fact-based, substantive

% who say over the last several years the tone and nature of political debate in this country has become ...



% who say Donald Trump has changed the tone and nature of political debate in the U.S. ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



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**Why has it become
so difficult to
address certain
issues?**

Wicked Problems



- Social or cultural problems
- Contentious issues
- Difficult or impossible to solve
- Based on competing beliefs/values



**How do we move
forward as a
society?**



The Good News

- Adopting a “wicked problem” mindset can change how we communicate
- Citizen-led initiatives around the issue of dialogue
- Existence of a multi-perspective framework for dialogue
- Promoting deliberative engagement





What is deliberation?



Public Deliberation

- “Long and careful consideration or discussion” (NIF)
- “The discovery of a shared direction, guided by what we value most” (NIF)
- “Deliberation is an unbiased kind of talking that starts where the problem starts—with your experience of it.” (NIF)
- It’s not a bunch of abstract backroom negotiations, but real, genuine, human struggles of which we are a part.” (NIF)
- Patient practice of deliberation can lead to community change



ISSUE ADVISORY **Elections** **How Should We Encourage and Safeguard Voting?**

Many Americans are concerned about the US election system although we don't always agree on the main problem or how best to fix it. Is it too hard to vote? Is the system too easy to manipulate? Do we have rules that make voting fair, and accessible to all? Are we doing enough to ensure accuracy and credibility?

There was no real voter turnout in November 2020—about 180 million Americans participated even in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic—but it did little to ease these concerns. Although 96.7 percent of Americans who were eligible to vote did so, roughly a third did not in off-year local elections across the country, turnout averages just 21 percent.

Concerns about aging voting machines, out-of-date registration lists, vulnerable computer systems, foreign interference, and bureaucratic inertia plagued the 2020 election, and those concerns persist today. A major expansion of absentee voting due to the coronavirus pandemic, and resulting delayed vote counts, prompted fears among voters about ballot tampering and vote fraud. Reports in multiple states and more than 100 court cases produced no evidence of meaningful fraud, but many Americans believe we need a better system, one in which all eligible voters can vote and that was transparent and the accuracy of the results.

Half a century before Congress would prohibit absentee voting in federal elections, states had already begun to restrict

How can you vote in Maine, by mail in Maryland. A valid photo ID is required of all voters at the polls in Indiana, but not in Illinois. Registration rules and deadlines vary between and even within states.

But many people do know that you beyond the rules for voting itself. In presidential elections, a candidate can win the national popular vote but lose the Electoral College vote—and the presidency—as happened most recently in 2000 and 2016. Is that a problem? Should we eliminate the Electoral College? In most states, legislators draw district boundaries, sometimes to favor their own political party. Do we need a better way of drawing upcoming elections?

This issue advisory presents three options for moving forward, each reflecting a different view of the problem, and each suggesting a different set of ideas about what should be done. Most people will find something to agree with in all three approaches, but each also has trade-offs, risks, or drawbacks that need to be taken into account and worked through.

In thinking about different approaches, we will consider three questions:

- Would having uniform national rules instead of having state and local rules give us more confidence?
- Do ID requirements for voting in the system's integrity, merely do we benefit in other ways?



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What Happens in Mini Publics?



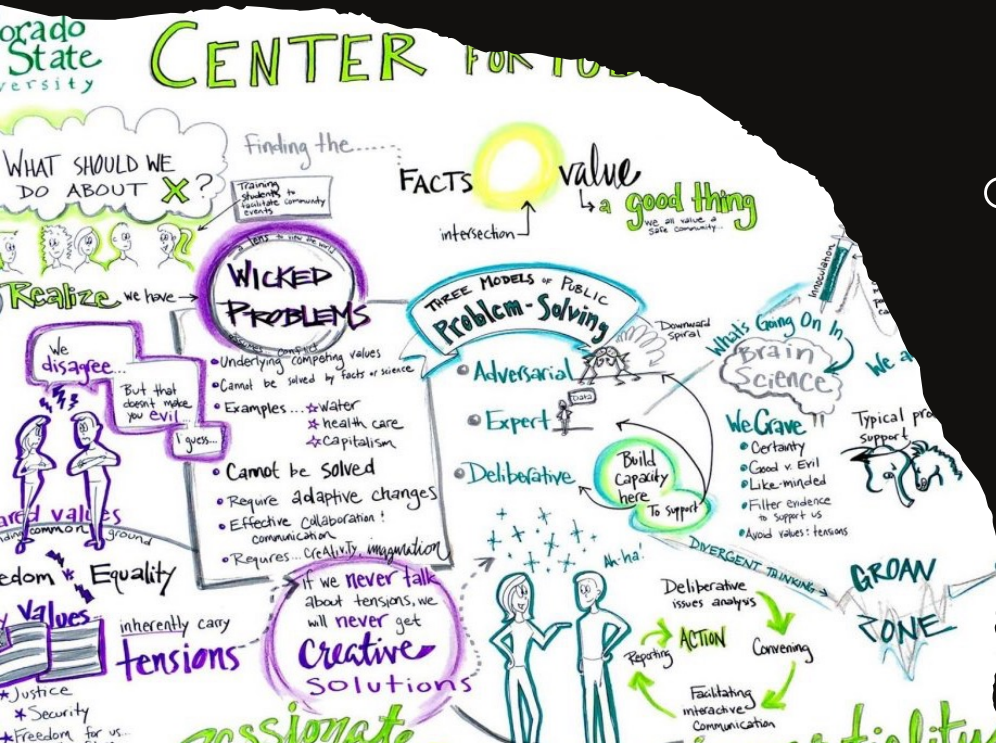


Why public deliberation?



Key Shifts of Deliberation

- From wicked people → to wicked problems
- From adversaries → to collaborators
- From inciting the worst of human nature → to bringing out of the best of human nature
- From facts as cherry picked ammunition → to facts as tools for addressing problems together



Dr. Martin Carcasson



How do we engage in public deliberation?



www.nifi.org

ISSUE ADVISORY

Elections

How Should We Encourage and Safeguard Voting?

Many Americans are concerned about the US election system although we don't always agree on the main problem or how best to fix it. Is it too hard to vote? Is the system too easy to manipulate? Do we have rules that make voting fair and accessible to all? Are we doing enough to ensure accuracy and credibility?

There was record voter turnout in November 2020—almost 160 million Americans cast ballots even in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic—but it did little to ease these concerns. Although 66.7 percent of Americans who were eligible to vote did so, roughly a third did not. In off-year elections across the country, turnout

felon can vote in Maine, but not in Maryland. A valid photo ID is required of all voters at the polls in Indiana, but not in Illinois. Registration rules and deadlines vary between and even within states.

But many point to issues that go beyond the rules for voting itself. In presidential elections, a candidate can win the nationwide popular vote but lose the Electoral College vote—and the presidency—as happened most recently in 2000 and 2016. Is that a problem? Should we eliminate the Electoral College? In most states, legislatures draw district boundaries, sometimes to favor their own political party. Do we need a better way of drawing up voting districts?

UCF presents three options for moving forward with the problem and



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Ground Rules

Listen

- Listening is just as important as speaking

Consider

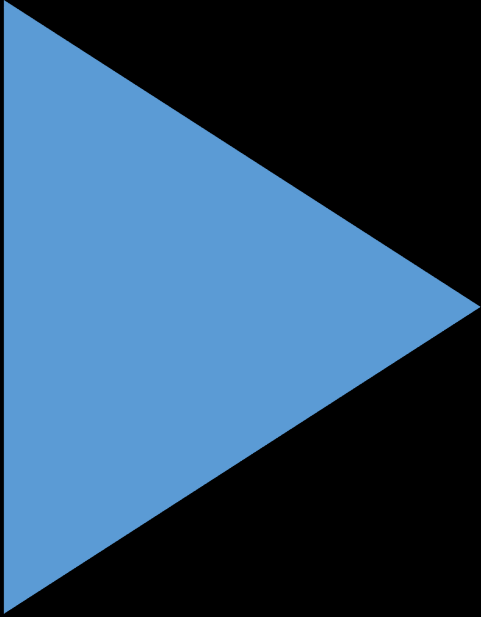
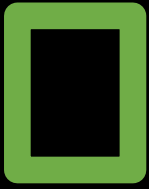
- Consider all options fairly

Respect

- Maintain an open and respectful atmosphere

Participate

- Everyone is encouraged to participate



Discussion Starter Video

Link to video:

<https://vimeo.com/561864289>

Issue Advisory

Make it easier
to vote.

- This option says that giving every American a chance to vote should be our priority.

Do more to
make elections
secure.

- This option says that making elections more secure should be our priority.


Offer more and
better choices.

- This option says that changing the system to offer all voters real choices should be our priority.



Post Forum Questionnaire

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POST-FORUM QUESTIONNAIRES

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COMPLETE A MODERATOR REPORT

COMPLETE A QUESTIONNAIRE:

- *Elections: How Should We Encourage and Safeguard Voting?*
- *School, Interrupted: How Should We Teach in a Pandemic?*
- *Youth & Opportunity: What Should We Do for Future Generations to Thrive?*



Closing Reflections

Now that we have deliberated, are there ideas or viewpoints you hadn't considered before?

Can you now identify any shared concerns or hopes we have discovered in our conversation?

How has what you heard in the forum affected your thinking?

Can you identify any tensions that came up during the deliberations?

What could you do as an individual to improve our voting system?

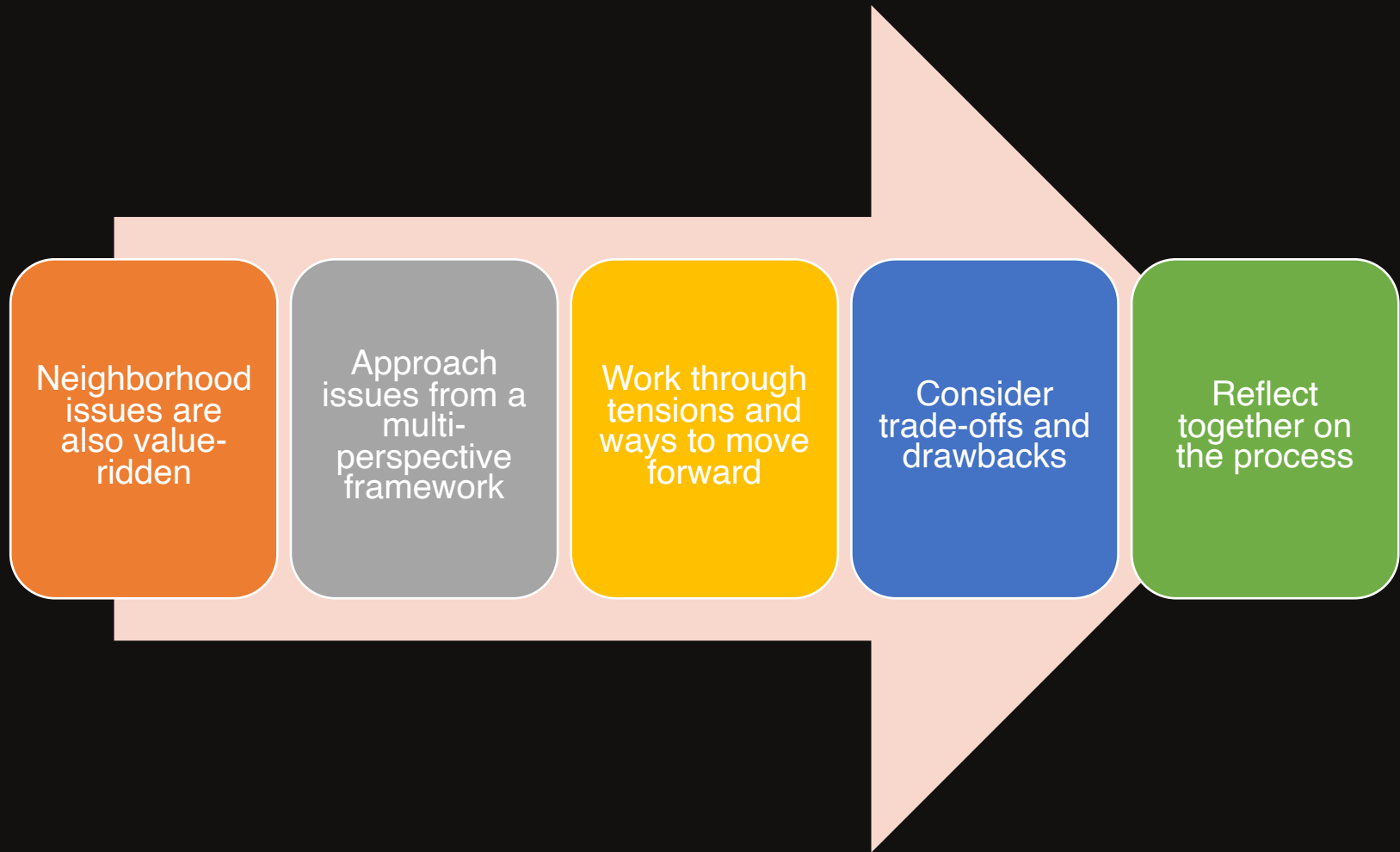
What could you do if you worked with others in the community?



How does deliberation apply to neighborhood issues?



Deliberation in the Neighborhood





**What resources
are available to
support us?**

Engaging in Deliberation

Kettering
Foundation,
National Issues
Forums (NIFI)
& National
Coalition for
Dialogue &
Deliberation
(NCDD)

Issue
Discussion
Guides &
Moderator
Guides

Online
Deliberation
Tool &
Resources

Questionnaires
& Issue-based
Slides



[illegible]

Understand that wicked problems are based on competing beliefs/values

Separate people from the problem

Respect the right of others to hold and express views different than our own

Discover a shared direction based on what we value most

Questions?

